

Discussion:

Ohio Conference of Home Demonstration Agents,
March 1940. (Time allowance $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours.)

Reserve

Leader of discussion:

Subject:

The problem of working with more rural families
in extension. (Write on board.)

1. Define the problem.

A. Who are participating?

Obtain facts on who are participating from members of groups
(1st in importance) and from published facts (2d in importance).

Select the functioning facts or data that have bearing on problem
and write on board.

These items are from 1938 county statistical reports.

1. 14 percent of farm homes in Ohio made improvements as a result
of home demonstration program in 1938.
2. 5 percent of other homes made improvements.
3. 9 percent (farm and non farm homes) made improvements.
4. Each home demonstration agent worked with an average of 22
groups and an average of 823 members.
5. Each home demonstration agent worked with an average of 31
4-H Clubs and an average of 463 members.
6. Each home agent influenced an average of 910 homes to make
improvements as a result of the home demonstration program.
7. Each home demonstration agent was assisted by an average of
107 volunteer local leaders.
8. Any evidences that upper social and economic groups were
reached.

B. Who are not participating?

1. A large percentage of farm families.
2. Lower income group, very high income group.
3. Some of age group who have children.
4. Some of the older rural youth group.

C. Reasons for nonparticipation. Why don't they participate?

1. Too many home activities.
2. Transportation difficulties.
3. Religious convictions.
4. Foreign groups.
5. Bad weather, poor roads.
6. Illness in the homes.
7. Personality and teaching ability of home demonstration agent.
8. Mobility of families.
9. Seasonal work.
10. Lack of publicity on part of county extension office.
11. Procrastination of homemaker.
12. Type of leader.
13. Community friction.
14. Homemaker or family not familiar with program.
15. Program does not meet felt needs.
16. Lack of money, or the family is in lower economic status.
17. Small children in family.
18. Misunderstanding of project.

Be sure majority of group is agreed as to what the problem is and the reasons for nonparticipation. Make brief summary. (Most conferences fail because problem is not discussed thoroughly.)

II. What is the solution? What can we as a group do something about?
(List on board possible solutions.)

A. Some possible solutions.

1. More functioning leadership would take care of four or five of the above difficulties.
2. Interest or small neighborhood groups, agent or local leader to assist with these groups.

3. More community-wide or general meetings.
 4. Some occasional meetings rather than regular meetings.
 5. Program planned with and for nonparticipants.
 6. Programs planned to meet seasonal needs.
 7. Use of qualified membership to help those unable to attend meetings, to secure new membership, or to assist families outside group.
 8. More planned home visits in some communities.
 9. Reach more people through exhibits, radio, news service, circular letters, and bulletins.
 10. Through indirect influence.
 11. Increased use of result demonstrations that stand as examples of better family living in the community. More result demonstration tours.
 12. Cooperating more with other agencies in the community and county.
 13. Through planned publicity programs setting forth accomplishments.
 14. Use of plan for club member or older 4-H Club girl to have nursery room for small children.
- B. Consideration of some advantages and disadvantages of proposed solutions.
(More functioning leadership.)

Advantages.

1. Wider spread of work.
2. With more leaders more people take responsibility.
3. More leaders give a greater variety of offerings.
4. More functioning leaders in more subjects.
5. People feel that it is more the people's program.
6. Development of leader.
7. Leaders know local problems.
8. Leaders give better publicity.
9. Leaders release some of home demonstration agent's time.

10. Leaders help with local arrangement.

Disadvantages.

1. People want work from home demonstration agent.
2. Most difficult teaching job is left to leader.
3. Misinformation.
4. Local people not always willing to listen to local leader.
5. Use of local leader may narrow choice of activities in program.
6. Requires time to locate and train local leaders.
7. Local leaders may not be able to give amount of time required to receive, digest, and give work to group.

III. Decide how the solutions selected can be put into effect. (List steps.)

IV. Plan to carry out decision.

V. Carry out plan. (IV, V, and VI if carried out might need to be carried out on the job.)

VI. Make summary of conference discussion.

Write all solutions on board before discussing advantages and disadvantages of each solution.

A condensation of the steps outlined by John Dewey in his book How We Think. pp. 68-78.

Discussion as a problem-solving device

In general, three steps are involved in the solution of problems:

1. The gaining of a clear understanding of what the problem is, its ramifications, and limitations.
2. An exploring for solutions.
3. A critical examination of the possible solutions and the selection of the best.

These are the steps an individual follows in solving his own problems, and they are likewise the steps followed in the solution of problems by a group.

Outline for Leading a Discussion

- I. Identify the problem. What is the specific question to be decided?
(Write on board.)
 - A. Get the facts.
 - B. Select functioning facts or data.
 - C. Explore the problem.
 - D. Discuss different phases of problem and reasons for its existence.
 - E. Be sure majority of group is agreed as to what the problem is.
 - F. Briefly summarize factors in the situation that are important.
- II. What are some possible solutions? (List all solutions before you discuss one.)
- III. Advantages and disadvantages to each solution if there is time.

Summarize briefly solutions with advantages and disadvantages of each one that has been agreed upon by group.
- IV. How to put solution into effect.
- V. Plan to carry out solution or decision.
- VI. Carry out plan.

(IV, V, and VI if carried out at all might need to be carried out on job.)

Remember that most conferences fail because problem is not discussed thoroughly and there is not a general agreement as to what the problem is.

Prepared by Gladys Gallup

